

Stanley G. Payne

A History of Fascism,  
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*This book is dedicated to  
Juan J. Linz and George L. Mosse,  
pathbreakers in fascist studies.*

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The doctrinaires who came to command the greatest cultural attention were the writers and thinkers of the *nouvelle droite* (new right) of the 1970s and 1980s. They were formed around a study center known as GRECE (Groupe-ment de Recherche et d'Etudes pour une Civilisation Européenne, Group of Research and Studies for a European Civilization), and their leading figure, Alain de Benoist, won a prize from the Académie Française for a book of essays. Generally denounced, they nonetheless exerted a certain fascination within the French intelligentsia for their bold contradiction of contemporary norms.

The *nouvelle droite* is extremely elitist, hierarchical, and antiegalitarian but rejects the mysticism and idealism of an Evola, affirming the importance of science in modern life and relying heavily on the new sociobiology. Unlike the classic right, the new right maintains a religious position that is exclusively pagan, opposing equally Marxism and "Judeo-Christianity." It attempts to create a political and philosophical program on the basis of a certain kind of human anthropology, which gives it an intellectuality and rigor normally lacking in vitalist neofascism.<sup>32</sup>

The first popular antisystem movement of the right in postwar France was the group led by Pierre Poujade in the early 1950s. Poujade, however, was a right-wing populist who failed to develop a consistent political organization.<sup>33</sup> More important in later years was Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose Front National became an electoral force in the 1980s. The Front National is a rightist-nationalist movement opposed to immigration, foreign minorities, crime, disorder, and modern egalitarianism, which is held to contradict the natural organic hierarchy of human life. Thus it stands for an organic and more hierarchical national community. In five different elections between 1984 and 1989 (two for the French parliament, two for the European parliament, and one for the presidency), candidates of the Front National won from 10 to 15 percent of the national vote, though its parliamentary representation has varied drastically, going down from thirty-two to one after the elections of 1987. In 1993 it gained 12.5 percent of the popular vote but no assembly seat.<sup>34</sup>

Neofascism is of very scant importance in the smaller democracies of northern Europe. Proportionately the largest number of small right radical and neofascist groups appears to have been formed in Belgium (reflecting the Flemish-Walloon ethnic tension, at least to some extent). They have scored a few minor local electoral successes.<sup>35</sup>

32. A.-M. Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la Nouvelle Droite: La GRECE et son histoire* (Paris, 1988).

33. S. Hoffman, *Le mouvement Poujade* (Paris, 1956).

34. E. Plénel and A. Rollat, eds., *L'effet Le Pen* (Paris, 1984); E. Roussel, *Le cas Le Pen: Les nouvelles droites en France* (Paris, 1985); J. Chatain, *Les affaires de M. Le Pen* (Paris, 1987); N. Mayer and P. Perrineau, eds., *Le Front National à découvert* (Paris, 1989).

35. Michel Géoris-Reitshof's brief *Extrême droite et néo-fascisme en Belgique* (Brussels, 1962) presented a taxonomy of the right, reactionary right, and neofascist groups.

In England Oswald Mosley survived the war. Always among the most intellectual of national fascist leaders, he later stressed doctrine and theory even more. The Union Movement which he founded in 1948 did not propose a categorical neofascism but occupied a differentiated position on the radical right. Much more categorical was Colin Jordan's National Socialist Movement, though it later changed its title. The only right radical British organization of any note has been the National Front, created by the fusion of various right radical groups (some of them close to neo-Nazism) in 1967. It reached 17,500 members by 1974, but its electoral appeal peaked only a few years later and then rapidly declined. By 1984 membership was down to three thousand.<sup>36</sup>

If it is clear that, on the one hand, neofascism and the radical right have created a kind of permanent subculture in most western European countries, on the other it is equally clear that they have been doomed to a ghetto-like existence of electoral insignificance, escaped only by sporadic, desperate essays in terrorism which lead nowhere. The Western world has been inoculated against fascism, and all the cultural trends of the second half of the century have militated against it. Even a major new economic crisis will probably be inadequate to give it life, for its competitors are more sophisticated and it lacks any broad philosophical basis in terms credible to the ordinary population.

But of course for many years a legion of leftist journalists and commentators, as well as a large chorus of professional anti-Americanists, have been certain that in the Western world neofascism would soon become strongest, even predominant, in the United States rather than Europe. Once more they are doomed to disappointment, their most common fate. Though the black leader Marcus Garvey once claimed to have "invented" a fascism for black Americans, we have seen that the interwar United States harbored scarcely any fascist-type movements for black or white, with the main exception of the imported German-American Bund.

The situation in some respects has been more promising for would-be fascistologists in the second half of the century, for a large number of small neo-Nazi and white supremacist right radical groups have been formed in the United States. Though all are very small, more than a few have engaged in violence. Similarly, several black extremist groups have created forms of right radical black nationalism, though not of categorical black neofascism. Not a single one of these has come remotely close to developing any political significance, though the black extremist groups have become proportionately stronger than the white ones. Moreover, not one has proved effective in converting itself

36. The National Front harbored a diversity of currents from the comparatively moderate to direct neo-Nazism. See N. Fielding, *The National Front* (London, 1981); C. T. Husbands, *Racial Exclusionism and the City: The Urban Support of the National Front* (London, 1983); R. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain: A History, 1918-1985* (Oxford, 1987), 274-89; and G. Gable, "The Far Right in Contemporary Britain," in Chelos, Ferguson, and Vaughan, eds., *Neo-Fascism* 244-63.

into any kind of more moderate mass political organization that could compete for votes.<sup>37</sup> As hard as it may be for the left to accept the fact, neofascism is even weaker in the United States than in western Europe.

Nor has Latin America—home to recurring cycles of authoritarianism, revolutionism, and terrorism—done much better in re-creating classic fascism. The new wave of rightist dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s excited considerable speculation among commentators about a new “Latin American fascism,” yet aside from Communist Cuba all these regimes were right-wing military systems without any elaborate ideology and without any mobilized political basis. Their economic and security policies were more sophisticated than those of traditional military regimes, yet they were much more adequately described by the new appellation of military “bureaucratic authoritarianism”<sup>38</sup> than by “fascism.”<sup>39</sup> A good many new fascist and right radical circles have been organized here in the past two generations, as in most other parts of the world, yet, as usual, their number has been inversely proportional to their significance. The only right radical movement to survive from the end of the fascist era through the subsequent period has been the right radical Falange Socialista Boliviana, a minor force in Bolivian affairs. Though the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario did come to power by revolution in Bolivia by 1952, by that time it had lost most of its early fascist coloration and characteristics.

In developed countries outside Europe, the search for the equivalents of fascism has often turned toward Japan and South Africa. In chapter 10 we saw that interwar Japan failed to develop any direct political equivalent of European fascism; even though the semipluralist Japanese system of the 1930s did achieve a partial functional equivalent of it in practice. Since 1945 Japan has been largely demilitarized and has drastically realtered its priorities. The country nonetheless harbors many small fringe religious and political groups, including a few that are neofascist and many more that are right radical nationalist. By the mid-1980s at least fifty radical nationalist associations with some 120,000 members were identified.<sup>40</sup> One of the most influential right radicals was the multimillionaire gambling czar Ryoichi Sasakawa, a major financier of

37. Conceivably the organization that has come the closest—and that's not saying much—is Lyndon LaRouche's National Caucus of Labor Committees, which has placed a very few members in minor local offices. Yet the NCLC has only some, not most, of the characteristics of a fascist movement. See D. King, *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism* (New York, 1989).

38. G. O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism* (Berkeley, 1973). Fundamental works in this area include D. Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton, 1979); A. Rouquié, *The Military and the State in Latin America* (Berkeley, 1987); J. M. Malloy, ed., *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, 1977); and F. B. Pike and T. Stritch, eds., *The New Corporatism* (South Bend, Ind., 1974).

39. See H. Trindade, “La question du fascisme en Amérique Latine,” *Revue Française de Science Politique* 33:2 (April 1983): 281–312.

40. O'Maoláin, *Radical Right* 176–77.

such groups and apparently also a man with strong *yakuza* (organized crime) connections. Yet Japan is similar to most other countries in that nearly all these circles and organizations are small and without influence.

Probably the largest of the extremist-nationalist groups in Japan is Ryubo Okawa's Institute for Research in Human Happiness, whose title is an interesting commentary on the forms such forces must take in the postfascist era of hedonism and materialism. His book *Nostradamus: Fearful Prophecies* foresees a Japan dominant in the twenty-first century after having defeated both Russia and the United States, able to make China “a slave” and Korea “a prostitute.”<sup>41</sup> Okawa's institute has been said to have two million followers, but it has not been able to become a very significant political force. Democracy has more shallow roots in Japan than in most European countries, and Japanese nationalism is latently stronger also than in most European countries. The revolution that would create a true neofascist potential is not in sight, however, as the country continues to evolve further in the direction of Western hedonism and materialism.

South Africa long seemed more promising to those looking for a contemporary fascism. It possessed the most racist system in the world and in earlier years proportionately more citizens who sympathized with Nazism than in any other country outside Europe. A sector of the radical right even split off from the dominant National Party to form a more extreme Reconstituted National Party in 1969, followed four years later by a yet more extreme Afrikaner Resistance Movement, which eventually claimed fifty thousand members and had a militia called the Storm Falcons. Indeed, there was little doubt that in the Afrikaans-speaking population there was greater sympathy for more extreme forces and measures than in most developed countries. Yet throughout the post-war period South Africa remained a “racial democracy” for whites and not a completely authoritarian system of any kind. This, plus the pressures of the times and the black majority, eventually forced a basic change, so that by 1994 South Africa had suddenly become a multiracial democracy, though it was far from certain that it would be able to develop effectively as one. Nonetheless, for the time being this was a severe blow to explorers for neofascism: Certainly the future potential for extremist politics remains greater there than in any other developed country with the exception of Russia so that the future remains uncertain.

If effective neofascism stubbornly refused to blossom in democratic and capitalist countries, some analysts eventually looked to the Communist regimes, most of which became increasingly nationalist from the 1950s on. A number of them relied on powerful variants of the *Führerprinzip*, extreme ethnocentric nationalism, and racism (as well as the ultimately grotesque in

41. *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison), Oct. 20, 1991.